

Texas Commission on Fire Protection

Academy

Examination Procedures



Texas Commission on Fire Protection
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**TEXAS COMMISSION ON FIRE PROTECTION
FIRE SERVICE STANDARDS AND CERTIFICATION DIVISION
TRAINING APPROVAL AND TESTING PROGRAM**

Academy Examination Procedures

This pamphlet contains examination procedures for fire academies wishing to test in accordance with the Texas Commission on Fire Protection rules and state statutes.

The contents of the following procedures will provide the necessary information and instructions to follow when making application to the commission for a state certification examination. Prospective examinees should review the contents in this pamphlet (as needed for given situations) in order to fulfill the requirements of testing.

Please contact a Training Approval and Testing Program staff member at 512-936-3819 if you have any questions regarding the information in this booklet or any attachments.

Enclosed with these procedures are the following:

- Notice of Course Approval (SLC-030)
- Certificate of Completion form (TCFP-031)
- Academy Student Application for Testing form (TCFP-046) – when applicable
- Commission-Designated Skill Evaluation envelopes – when applicable
- Various Important Notices – when applicable

ACADEMY EXAMINATION APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

To apply for a commission certification examination for academy students, the chief training officer must complete and submit the Training Prior Approval form (TCFP-030) to the commission twenty (20) calendar days prior to the proposed start date of the certification training. For all disciplines, with the exception of basic fire suppression (structure) examinations, the certification examination must take place either at a commission regional test site (schedule available on the commission's website at www.tcfp.texas.gov) or with a commission-approved designee. A commission-approved designee is defined as an entity (i.e. college testing center) or individual approved by the standards division director to administer commission certification examinations. Written documentation from the commission-approved designee verifying the test location, date, and time must be attached to the TCFP-030 form. For more information on this process, please contact a Training Approval and Testing Program staff member at 512-936-3819.

Upon approval of the course, the commission will send the training provider a Notice of Course Approval (SLC-030), a Certificate of Completion form (TCFP-031), and an Academy Student Application for Testing form (TCFP-046) if applicable. Additionally, each training entity (except for Basic Marine Fire Suppression academies) will receive sealed envelopes identifying the randomly selected commission-designated performance skill evaluations. For further information on this process see "Commission-Designated Performance Skill Evaluations" within these procedures. The Commission-Designated Skill Evaluations must be successfully passed before the individual is qualified to take the state certification examination.

GENERAL EXAMINATION INFORMATION

COMMISSION-DESIGNATED PERFORMANCE SKILL EVALUATIONS

In order for an individual to qualify for the commission's state certification examination, the student must successfully complete and pass all commission-designated skill evaluations. The evaluation will be a formal test setting supervised by the chief training officer or their designee. Commission-designated performance skill evaluations are required for those disciplines for which performance skills have been developed for the curriculum (i.e., Structure Fire Fighter, Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighter, Fire Inspector, Fire Investigator, Hazardous Materials Technician, Driver/Operator-Pumper, Fire Officer, and Fire Service Instructor).

The chief training officer will receive one sealed envelope for each subject area of the applicable curriculum, along with any course approval documentation as required by commission rule §439.11. For further information on the specific subjects per discipline see the "Skill Envelope Subjects" on the following page. The evaluation for competency of the commission-designated skills must take place at the end of all training on the subject noted on the outside of the sealed envelope. The evaluation must occur on the date(s), time(s), and location(s) indicated on the *Commission-Designated Skills* schedule that is contained within the Training Prior Approval application. The commission must be notified immediately of any deviation from the submitted commission-designated skill schedule.

The sealed commission designated skill envelope shall not be opened until all training and/or practice sessions for the designated subject area have been completed. No more than 24 hours prior to the testing date, the sealed envelope may be opened by the chief training officer in order to facilitate the scheduling of personnel and resources; however, information about which skill is to be tested must remain confidential. Once skill testing has begun, no retraining or extra practice shall be allowed by field examiners until all testing candidates have completed the initial testing on the designated subject area.

For all disciplines, performance evaluations may be conducted either individually or in a team setting, when appropriate, as long as the field examiner is satisfied that the student is able to perform the skill successfully and the integrity of the testing environment has been maintained. The student may be allowed two attempts to complete each skill; however, any retests must be evaluated by different qualified field examiner. A second failure during the evaluation process will require remedial training in the failed skill area with a certified instructor before being allowed a third attempt. A third failure will require that the student repeat the entire certification curriculum. The instructor of a particular subject may not evaluate that subject unless the instructor is an approved field examiner and is either certified in the discipline to be evaluated or can document comparable training. All required skill evaluations must be demonstrated before a commission-approved field examiner. Records of skill testing (electronic or paper) must be maintained by the academy on each examinee. The records must reflect the results of the skill evaluations, the dates that the evaluations occurred, and the names of the field examiner(s) who evaluated the skills.

SKILLS ENVELOPE SUBJECTS

DISCIPLINE	# SKILLS	NFPA	SUBJECT CATEGORIES (ENVELOPE TITLES FOR ACADEMIES)
Basic Fire Suppression (incl. FF I, FF II, HM AW, HM OPS-with Mission Specific)	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1001) 5.1, 6.1 • (1001) 5.2, 6.2 • (1001) 5.3, 6.3 • (1001) 6.4 • (1001) 5.5, 6.5 • (472) 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 6.2, 6.6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General • Communications • Fireground Operations • Rescue • Prevention • Hazardous Materials (incl. AW, OPS w/MS)
Fire Fighter I	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1001) 5.1 • (1001) 5.2 • (1001) 5.3 • (1001) 5.5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General • Communications • Fireground Operations • Prevention
Fire Fighter II	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1001) 6.1 • (1001) 6.2 • (1001) 6.3 • (1001) 6.4 • (1001) 6.5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General • Communications • Fireground Operations • Rescue • Prevention
Hazardous Materials Awareness	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (472) 4.1, 4.2, 4.4 • (472) 4.2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General • Analyzing the Incident
Hazardous Materials Operations (incl. Mission Specific)	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (472) 5.1 • (472) 5.2 • (472) 5.4 • (472) 5.5 • (472) 6.2, 6.6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General • Analyzing the Incident • Implementing the Planned Response • Evaluating Progress • Mission Specific Competencies

ARFF	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1003) 6.1 • (1003) 6.2 • (1003) 6.3 • (1003) 6.4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General • Response • Suppression • Rescue
Basic Fire Inspector (incl. Inspector I, Inspector II, Plan Examiner I)	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1031) 4.1, 4.3, (472) 4.2 • (1031) 4.2, 5.2, 7.2 • (1031) 4.3, 5.3 • (1031) 5.4, 7.3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General • Administration • Field Inspection • Plans Review
Inspector I	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1031) 4.1, 4.3, (472) 4.2 • (1031) 4.2 • (1031) 4.3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General • Administration • Field Inspection
Inspector II	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1031) 5.2 • (1031) 5.3 • (1031) 5.4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration • Field Inspection • Plans Review
Plan Examiner I	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1031) 7.2 • (1031) 7.3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration • Plans Review
Fire/Arson Investigator	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1033) 4.2 • (1033) 4.3 • (1033) 4.4 • (1033) 4.5 • (1033) 4.6 • (1033) 4.7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scene Examination • Documenting the Scene • Evidence Collection • Interview • Post-Incident Investigation • Presentation
Hazardous Materials Technician	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (472) 7.2 • (472) 7.3 • (472) 7.4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyzing the Incident • Planning the Response • Implementing the Planned Response
Driver/Operator-Pumper	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1002) 4.2 • (1002) 4.3 • (1002) 5.1 • (1002) 5.2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preventive Maintenance • Driving/Operating • General • Operations
Fire Instructor I	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1041) 4.2 • (1041) 4.3 • (1041) 4.4 • (1041) 4.5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Management • Instructional Development • Instructional Delivery • Evaluation and Testing
Fire Instructor II	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1041) 5.2 • (1041) 5.3 • (1041) 5.4 • (1041) 5.5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Management • Instructional Development • Instructional Delivery • Evaluation and Testing
Fire Instructor III	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1041) 6.2 • (1041) 6.3 • (1041) 6.5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Management • Instructional Development • Evaluation and Testing
Fire Officer I	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1021) 4.2 • (1021) 4.3 • (1021) 4.4 • (1021) 4.5 • (1021) 4.6 • (1021) 4.7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resources Management • Community & Government Relations • Administration • Inspection and Investigation • Emergency Service Delivery • Health & Safety
Fire Officer II	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1021) 5.2 • (1021) 5.3 • (1021) 5.4 • (1021) 5.5 • (1021) 5.6 • (1021) 5.7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resources Management • Community & Government Relations • Administration • Inspection and Investigation • Emergency Service Delivery • Health & Safety

Pre-performance evaluation instructions

The chief training officer or their designee will:

1. Ensure that all field examiners who will be evaluating the students are familiar with the applicable performance evaluation forms. These evaluation forms can be found on the commission's website at www.tcfp.texas.gov.
2. Verify that there are an adequate number of field examiners, and that they are qualified to evaluate their assigned skill stations.

FIELD EXAMINER QUALIFICATIONS COMMISSION RULES §439.3, "FIELD EXAMINER"

- A. Possess and maintain, as a minimum, certification as a Fire Service Instructor.
- B. Be qualified in the subject area to be evaluated.
- C. Have completed an examiner orientation class and received a current examiner identification card (I.D. card must be present during the examination process). Field examiners must renew their status every two years according to commission rules.
- D. Have a signed "Letter of Intent" on file with the commission.

Note: If an examiner is found in violation of Texas Commission on Fire Protection guidelines, that examiner may lose their examiner I.D. and examiner privileges [Texas Government Code, Chapter 419, 419.036]. The examiner may use the appeal process stated in the Standards Manual for Fire Protection Personnel, Chapter 401, Subchapters D, E, and F.

3. Discuss the performance evaluation procedures and answer any questions from the field examiners. The chief training officer or their designee will explain the differences between a retry and a retest as explained in the commission's online field examiner course.
4. Ensure that the necessary equipment is available at the test site and that the selected skill stations are arranged properly, if applicable.
5. When applicable, establish pre- and post-holding areas to ensure that unevaluated students cannot observe candidates being tested. A mechanism shall be in place to make certain that evaluated and unevaluated students cannot communicate with each other during the evaluation process.
6. Ensure that the field examiners and examinees understand the following procedures:
 - a. Proper completion of any forms used in the evaluation process. The overall grading system of the performance skill examination will be on a Pass/Fail or Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis; however, on some performance skill evaluation forms, many (if not all) of the steps are based on a point system. This numeric portion of the scoring gives a set number of points for each step within the tested

skill and the examinee must score a sufficient number of points to pass the skill (the point values will differ with each skill). This will allow some leeway in grading if a particular step(s) within the tested skill is/are not completed satisfactorily. No partial points are to be given. The steps that are noted as an absolute must be completed satisfactorily. If the absolute is not completed successfully, it constitutes a failure of the skill.

If the skill is a timed skill and the allotted time does not require mandatory/absolute passage, and the examinee fails to complete the skill in the allotted time, the examinee will receive the indicated point deduction. The examiner shall terminate the skill evaluation when the time to complete the skill exceeds twice the allotted time. If the total points are still within the range of passing and all other mandatory/absolute steps (when applicable) are passed, the examinee will pass the skill.

- b. Performance Skill Test Results -- The field examiner will notify the examinees of their results. If an individual fails a skill, the field examiner will explain the area(s) failed.
 - c. The arrangement of the skill stations, if applicable. Note: An examinee shall not receive any prior notification on the specific skills to be tested.
 - d. General and life safety instructions as needed for the particular discipline to be evaluated. (For example: Point out emergency exits if in a classroom setting, or explain the necessity of stopping a skill evaluation if equipment fails and the safety of the examinee is threatened.)
 - e. Limitation of proctor/evaluator assistance (i.e. rewording instructions, defining words, teaching) and how to handle questions or problems that may arise during the formal evaluation process.
- 7. Determine examinee testing order, if applicable.
 - 8. Commence examination.

COMMISSION STATE CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION INFORMATION

Note to chief training officers -- As part of the approval process, one of the three choice test dates you requested on your academy's Training Prior Approval form (TCFP-030) will be tentatively reserved. If the test dates chosen conflict with previously confirmed scheduled test(s), a commission staff member will contact you for a revised choice of test dates. For basic fire suppression (structure) academies, please indicate test dates that will allow the lead examiner time to travel during a normal work week of Monday through Friday. The time of the testing will be determined by commission staff and will be scheduled between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. The reserved date, time, and location will be indicated under the "Scheduled Test Date" section on the Academy Student Application for Testing form (TCFP-046) that will be returned with your course approval notice.

In order for the academy to complete the application for examination process, the top portion titled "Student Information" must be completed by each student enrolled in your academy (duplicate the form as necessary). These forms must be signed and dated by the students. Please return each student's completed Academy Student Application for Testing (TCFP-046) as one package to the commission office no later than the third day of instruction.

NOTE: The reserved test date(s) will not be confirmed until the commission receives a completed Academy Student Application for Testing (TCFP-046) on each examinee. Once the applications are received and processed, a "Test Date Confirmation" notice will be faxed or mailed.

Each examinee is required to present to the examiner a Certificate of Completion form and picture identification prior to the administration of the examination. It is the responsibility of the chief training officer to issue a Certificate of Completion for each examinee (on a form provided by the commission) and ensure that the completed forms have been received by the commission.

The Texas Commission on Fire Protection certification examination consists of multiple-choice, matching, and/or true-false questions that are randomly selected. Each examination may have two types of questions: pilot and active. Pilot questions are new questions placed on the examination for statistical purposes only. These questions do not count against an examinee if answered incorrectly. The pilot questions are scattered throughout the examination; therefore, all questions must be answered to the examinee's best ability. The following items represent the examination discipline, time allowed, number of test questions, and number of optional pilot questions on the state examination.

Examination	Time Allowed	Active Questions	Pilot (optional)*
Structural Fire Suppression: Combined (FFI & II, Aw & Ops: includes Mission Specific-PPE & Product Control)	3 hours	150	25
Fire Fighter I	2 hours	100	15
Fire Fighter II	1 ½ hours	75	10
HazMat Awareness	½ hour	25	5
HazMat Operations (includes Mission Specific-PPE & Product Control)	½ hour	25	5
Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting	1 ½ hours	75	10
Marine Fire Fighter	1 hour	50	5
Inspector: Combined (Insp I, Insp II, PE I)	1 1/2 hours	75	10
Inspector I	1 hour	50	5
Inspector II	1 hour	50	5
Plan Examiner I	1 hour	50	5
Fire Investigator	1 ½ hours	75	10
Hazardous Materials Technician	1 hour	50	5
Driver/Operator – Pumper	1 hour	50	5
Instructor I	1 hour	50	5
Instructor II	1 hour	50	5
Instructor III	1 hour	50	5
Fire Officer I	1 hour	50	5
Fire Officer II	1 hour	50	5

*Note: The commission has the option of adding up to the number of pilot questions stated.

An individual who fails to pass the certification examination will be given one additional opportunity to pass the examination or section thereof. After two failures, the examinee must re-qualify by repeating the curriculum applicable to that examination. Retests must be done within 180 days from the original failed attempt. If the examinee fails to retest within the specified time frame, he or she will be required to repeat the curriculum applicable to that examination.

Pre-examination instructions

The examiner will:

1. Introduce him/herself and any other staff that may be present.
2. Circulate a student/examinee sign-in roster and collect a Certificate of Completion form from each examinee.
3. Review a state issued identification which contains the name and photograph of the examinee.
4. Explain that the minimum passing score on each examination shall be 70%. This means that 70% of the total possible valid questions must be answered correctly. The commission may, at its discretion, invalidate any question.
5. Distribute the following test materials:
 - a. One Examination Data Sheet
 - b. One Scantron General Purpose Answer Sheet
 - c. One examination booklet (Note: Examinees may write on their examination booklets and use these booklets as scratch paper.)
 - d. One calculator (if applicable)
 - e. Two pencils

Note: The commission will supply the above mentioned test materials for each examinee. The examinee(s) will not be allowed to view or mark on any part of the examination booklet until instructed to do so by the lead examiner.

6. Instruct the examinees on how to properly mark and complete the Scantron General Purpose answer sheet (i.e., no stray marks, darken your answer selection completely, and completely erase any changed answers).
7. Explain that the items on the test are numbered consecutively beginning with the number 1.
8. State that the examinee will need to mark their answer in the space provided for that item on the answer sheet.

9. Explain that a space left unmarked or marked more than once will be counted as an incorrect question by the computer grading system.
10. State that only one response is correct per question.
11. State that the examinee, the lead examiner, and the chief training officer cannot discuss the test content. If an examinee has a problem with a question, he or she is to write the question number and a short statement regarding the issue on the Examinee Feedback Form (located within the test booklet) after completing the examination. The examinee is not to take any test time to do this. If time has expired, the examiner can pick up the Scantron answer sheet and let the examinee finish making notations on the form. Any issues or questions indicated by the examinee are to be transposed over to the Data Base Question Comments form by a Training Approval and Testing Program staff member and submitted to the Curriculum Program staff for review and determination of the validity of the question. The examinee can find out the final determination of the validity of a question(s) brought forth by contacting either his or her chief training officer or the commission office in Austin, Texas seven (7) working days after the examination date.
12. Explain that no electronic devices (i.e. mobile phones, radios) are allowed in the testing area.
13. Commence the examination.

WARNING

An examinee shall not:

1. Violate any of the fraud provisions of Chapter 439, Texas Commission on Fire Protection Standards Manual for Fire Protection Personnel
2. Disrupt the examination
3. Bring into the examination site any books, notes, or other written materials related to the content of the examination
4. Refer to, use, or possess any such written material at the examination site
5. Give or receive answers or communicate in any manner with another examinee during the examination
6. Communicate any of the contents of an examination to another at any time
7. Steal, copy, or in any way reproduce any part of the examination
8. Engage in any deceptive or fraudulent act either during an examination or to gain admission to it
9. Solicit, encourage, direct, assist, or aid another person to violate any provision of Chapter 439
10. Bring into the examination site any electronic devices.

Post-examination instructions

1. When an examinee finishes the examination or time has expired, all test materials must be returned to the lead examiner.
2. The examinees must leave the test site after they have completed this part of the examination. Examinees will be instructed when and where to report for any other part of the examination (if applicable). No distractions will be allowed by the examinees or by any other individuals during the testing process.

EXAMPLES OF TEST QUESTIONS AND HOW TO RECORD ANSWERS ON THE SCANTRON ANSWER SHEET

The following are examples of test questions and the correct answer selections on a Scantron answer sheet.

EXAMPLE 1 -- Multiple Choice

1. Fire apparatus are painted _____.

- a. red
- b. lime yellow
- c. white
- * d. all answers are correct

	1	2	3	4	5
1.	[A]	[B]	[C]	■	[E]

The above question is an example of a question where at first review a., b., or c. could be correct; however, the correct answer is d. (Remember, fire apparatus can be painted any of the colors that were listed.)

EXAMPLE 2 -- Matching Question

Match the abbreviation in column B to the correct term in column A.

column A

- 1. _____ Fire Department
- 2. _____ Police Department
- 3. _____ Emergency Medical Service

column B

- A. PD
- B. EMS
- C. FD
- D. EMT

	1	2	3	4	5
1.	[A]	[B]	■	[D]	[E]
	1	2	3	4	5
2.	■	[B]	[C]	[D]	[E]
	1	2	3	4	5
3.	[A]	■	[C]	[D]	[E]

EXAMPLE 3 -- True/False

3. T F All fire apparatus are painted red.

	1	2	3	4	5
	[A]	■	[C]	[D]	[E]

Note: Block 1, [A], is used for TRUE and block 2, [B], is used for FALSE

READ EACH QUESTION CAREFULLY AND SELECT THE VERY BEST ANSWER

NOTIFICATION OF TEST RESULTS

Academy Test Results – Commission staff will provide the chief training officer with the preliminary test results within seven (7) business days after completion of the examination.

Note: Only call the commission office for test results if not received as stated above.

Individual Notification of Test Results – An individual may access his or her test score(s) and print the applicable grade letter(s) by logging into their *Firefighters: Individual and Department Online* (FIDO) account. To access the FIDO website please go to the commission's website at www.tcfp.texas.gov. If an examinee fails his or her first attempt, the commission will automatically send a test packet and the individual's statistical test analysis.